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ABSTRACT

Though recent technological developments have promised solutions to the costly problems of expanding card catalogs and changing cataloging practices, at the University of California libraries the problems have been compounded by a desire to stay compatible with the changing conventions of the Library of Congress and by an increasingly stringent budget. The reports of three committees at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) led to a decision in favor of the long-term goal of an on-line public catalog for all the UCLA libraries, with the intermediate goal of retaining the present public card catalogs until the on-line system is well established. This report reviews the essential criteria used to make that decision, including the advantages of the system, its relation to existing systems, problem areas, and costs. (EMH)

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U C L A

Working Group on Public Catalogs

Final Report

January 5, 1976

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# INTRODUCTION

Research libraries have long been concerned over the size, unwieldiness and cost of their ever-expanding card catalogs. This concern has been greatly intensified by recent and impending major changes in cataloging practices. Concomitantly, recent technological developments with important implications for cataloging, acquisitions and public service seem to offer possibilities for solutions to many library problems. In the light of these changes and developments, many libraries are closely examining the options now open to them for improving their catalogs and services.

The potential of machines for improving library services has been increased by rapid advances in the applications of computer technology to bibliographical processes. Access for scholars and librarians to local, regional and, eventually, international data bases in machine-readable form, automated systems of catalog and circulation control, and shared on-line cataloging are possibilities which forward-looking libraries must consider.

The Library of Congress is moving steadily, according to present expectations, toward the creation of fully automated bibliographic files using the machine-readable MARC data base. At the same time the Library of Congress is also planning to modify its cataloging policies and practices as new national and international standards are adopted. These developments will have devastating consequences for the public card catalogs of large research libraries, such as UCLA's, which rely heavily upon LC cataloging data, unless extensive changes are made to conform to the new LC usages. LC's decision to start cataloging all materials according to the new Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR) by 1980 or thereabouts will result in many head-on conflicts between entries for materials cataloged under these rules and entries for materials cataloged under the old American Library Association rules.

All major research libraries are seriously considering "closing" their public card catalogs and beginning new catalogs, perhaps in a different form. This step has already been taken by the New York Public Library and will soon be taken by Ohio State University. A catalog can be closed either absolutely, with no changes or additions after the cut-off date, or it can be closed with provision being made for limited changes and additions, and for some kind of syndetic apparatus to allow linkages with the new catalog. The Library of Congress is contemplating closing its own card catalog, with implications for other libraries that are not yet clear.

The University of California, faced with a stringent budget and mounting costs for acquisitions, services and facilities on its nine campuses, is being forced to reassess its library policies. The holdings of the separate campus libraries are being viewed in overall UC library planning as parts of a single co-ordinated University-wide resource collection, to be shared cooperatively by users on all campuses. To make such a plan viable a first priority is the availability of complete and up-to-date information about

the entire UC collection. To achieve total bibliographical accessibility, the University is investigating the potentialities of automation. A UC-wide Library Automation Program (ULAP) has been established, including a Bibliographic Center (BIBCENTER) for the development and support of UC cataloging products. Among programs under development are an on-line CIRCULATION module and a system of machine-readable files for currently acquisitioned monographs and serials.

Implementation of on-line bibliographic and circulation control at UCLA, of course, have to take a place in phases, because of problems of financing, governance and system design. But already cooperative work towards full-scale computerized access to and location control of state library resources is being discussed, particularly among UC, the California State and College system, and the State Library, and, through CLASS (California Library Authority for Systems and Services), other libraries (academic, special and private).

The University of California Libraries have followed with close attention experiments with on-line catalog control at other libraries, especially that at OCLC, Ohio College Library Center), BALLOT (a system developed at the Northern Virginia Community College and the Dra Technical Trade Library) and Stanford University's BALLOTS (Bibliographic Automation of Large Library Operations using a Time-shared System). BALLOTS has not apparently demonstrated the capability of supporting all major technical service functions except serials check-in, and has the basis of a powerful project for comprehensive on-line library bibliographic operation at UC. It must be emphasized that these projects all pertain to the cataloging process and not to the public catalog.

If, as is possible, library stacks are to be closed in the future, if library holdings deposited in storage collections (perhaps in Carrick Building and Southern regional storage facilities), an even greater burden will be placed on UC library catalogs. Users will have to rely entirely on the information supplied by the public catalog, without the reinforcement of direct access to the book stacks. This is yet another reason for improving bibliographic access to library materials.

It was against this background that the Working Group on Public Catalogs (WGPC) was established at UCLA in November, 1975. Its formation was especially prompted by indications that the Library of Congress by that decided to adopt Anglo-American by 1979 or 1978 - a decision which has in fact been many times postponed. The charge given to the committee by A. Thomas Ackerman, University Librarian, was "to develop a consensus approach to final decisions on closing the catalog . . . and other related questions." The committee, consisting of fifteen members from fourteen libraries, adopted the broader objective of "preparing a definitive study of the fundamental issues and alternatives in the development of public catalogs and making a recommendation for specific goals for public catalogs in UCLA libraries."

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] to meet the requirements of the Library experiment to create [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a comprehensive information [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] will be able to process orders, make claims and inventories, and perform other clerical tasks associated with the acquisitions function of the Library.

2. Serials files. Serials records files are needed to provide precise daily records of current holdings of periodicals, newspapers, and other serial publications whether in an on-line or manually maintained system.

3. Shelflists. Complete and undivided shelflists must be available, whether on-line shelflists created by a retrospective conversion of the public catalogs or, as is more likely, manual shelflists maintained by the filing of cards produced automatically from the on-line system.

4. External obligations. The computer must automatically produce cards, tapes, or other forms of communication to fulfill the Library's external obligations. These include reports such as those to the National Union Catalog, to New Serial Titles and to the Pacific Southwest Regional Medical Library Service Union Catalog, as well as the Music Library contributions to the International Union List of Imprints to 1800, the Physical Science and Technology Libraries' contributions to the Chemical Abstracts Service Union List of Congresses, and the records of incunabula to the Rare Book Division of LC.

D. Problem Areas

1. Special types of materials will present problems which must be resolved in designing an on-line catalog.

   a. Serials, newspapers, works-in-parts and other multi-volume works.

      i. Dividing the holdings and bibliographic records of continuing publications between the old card catalogs and the new on-line catalog would be unsatisfactory. Every effort should be made to avoid this. Highest priority should be given to maintaining full bibliographic and holdings information for continuing publications in the new on-line catalog. In all cases adequate cross references must be made between the two catalogs.

      ii. Unless the records are compatible with any separate check-in files or bindery records, major problems will develop.

   b. Materials not cataloged individually. There will always be collections of manuscripts, pamphlets or ephemera in

the Library which will never be cataloged on an item by item basis. Users will not be aware of the existence of these materials if provision is not made in the on-line system for automatic referral to such collections.

2. Provision must be made to handle incompatible catalog records produced by units which do not always follow LC cataloging practice; otherwise there will be difficulties in retrieving all relevant materials. Examples are:

   a. Biomedical Library.

      i. The NLM (National Library of Medicine) interpretation of the AACR (Anglo-American Cataloging Rules) is used by the Biomedical Library, resulting in many differences in choice of entry from those made at LC.

      ii. The NLM authority files for corporate and personal names are used; these files establish forms which often differ from those used at LC.

      iii. The Biomedical Library's subject authority file is primarily based on NLM, with additional subject headings from LC and the National Agriculture Library, and includes the Biomedical Library's own taxonomic headings.

   b. Law Library.

      The Law Library uses some of its own form headings, which differ from those used at LC and URL: e.g., commentaries on statutes or codes are not entered under the editors of the compilations, but under the form entry 'Laws, statutes, etc.' (LC uses either form); court decisions are entered with a filing device, 'Reports,' not used by LC ('California. Reports. Supreme Court,' rather than LC's 'California. Supreme Court').

3. The space needed for installation and use of an adequate number of terminals and printers, together with the space for back-up microform reader-printers, in addition to the present card catalog, must be considered in on-line catalog planning. All this equipment may take up much more space than has been envisaged and certainly more than is available in existing buildings.

4. Helping users unfamiliar with an on-line catalog to make full use of its capabilities by instruction, demonstration and active participation in computer searches will require an enormous commitment of staff time until users reach a stage where they are comfortable with the procedure and are able to conduct their own searches. This will be in addition to the continuing need for programs of instruction and assistance in the use of the card catalog.

5. During computer down-time, terminal breakdowns, and regularly scheduled maintenance periods, the on-line catalog will be partially or wholly inoperative and users must rely on the back-up system.

E. Costs

Although many libraries using OCLC as a cataloging tool report savings in some areas, no data is yet available on costs of maintaining an on-line public catalog. It is, therefore, virtually impossible to compare the cost of the present card catalogs with the cost of a public on-line catalog, because so many of the costs of maintaining the card catalog are not known and because so many of the costs associated with a public on-line catalog can only be estimated. It is unrealistic to assume that the cost of the public on-line catalog will represent a savings over the cost of the card catalog, either initially or on a continuing basis. Although the initial costs are expected to be high, it is anticipated that the on-line system will greatly enhance searching capabilities in the catalog, make records available on a more current basis, improve access to the Library's collections, diminish backlogs, and add new capabilities not now available in the card catalog format.

While some on-line costs will substitute for costs of the present catalogs, there is not sufficient data to determine which are substitutive and which are additional costs. If we were to participate in a cooperative venture, some of these costs of system development and on-line storage would be shared.

1. System development. This involves planning, developing and organizing a network of machines (hardware, i.e. CRT terminals, printers, microform reader/printers) and working programs (software), and training library staff and patrons to use the parts of this network as an on-line catalog.

2. Terminals and printers. These must be purchased and replaced, or leased in sufficient number. In addition to the initial costs, maintenance contract costs and insurance for these machines must be included.

3. Electrical installation. Multiple terminal/printer groupings will necessitate additional electrical installations and rewiring in various library units and the installation of appropriate lines between terminal/printer groupings and the computer location.

4. On-line storage. Present costs of storing bibliographic records on-line are estimated at approximately 10 cents per record per year. Although this cost is expected to decrease

over the coming decade, it is also to be expected that the size of the bibliographic file will grow, thus at least partially offsetting the anticipated drop in the per item cost.

5. Searching the data base. Searching the on-line catalog by users will generate substantial costs for computer time. In addition, substantial staff time will be required for assistance to and instruction of users.

6. Maintaining the data base. Additions to, deletions from and editing of the on-line catalog will generate costs for computer time. System maintenance and revision and adaptation of programs to future changes in technology will require substantial staff time and additional computer time.

7. Microform back-up system. The index of the register-index (as described in sections I.A.3 and I.B.12 above and I.C.4 below) must be cumulated frequently and the register supplemented. Both must be produced and reissued continually in multiple sets. A sufficient number of microform reader/printers must be purchased or leased, with attendant maintenance contract and insurance costs.

8. External obligations and shelflists. Production costs will be incurred when cards or magnetic tapes are produced to meet the external obligations described in section I.C.4 above and when all or some of the Library's shelflists are maintained in card form.

9. Technological development. Future technological developments will alter many of the factors considered here and modify some of the anticipated costs.

F. Disposition of pre-existing catalogs.

1. The existing card catalogs must not be abandoned. Any parts of the card catalogs that are not converted to the on-line system must be maintained actively, e.g., withdrawals, call number changes, location changes, open entry changes, must continue to be made. Linkages (interconnections) must be provided between the existing card catalogs and the new system, and vice versa. At a minimum, the user must be prompted continually that materials in the library's collections may appear either in the on-line catalog or in the card catalogs or in both places. Date of acquisition or date of publication, depending on which choice is made, will determine in which catalog later acquisitions will be found.

2. If funding permits, the ideal would be to convert the full bibliographic record for each item in the pre-existing catalogs into machine-readable form. If total conversion is not possible, first priority should be given to continuing publications. It would be desirable to pursue a rolling conversion of the entire

collection on a continuous basis. It would be possible to convert bibliographic records when cards are pulled for modification or when new editions are received. Additionally, it would be possible to begin with the A's and continue slowly through the alphabet as time and funding permit. Users should be informed about any on-going conversion of existing records, so that confusion about the scope of the on-line catalog and the card catalogs would be minimized.

G. Rejection of alternative catalog formats as sole catalog form

1. Card catalog

a. The physical growth of the card catalogs will necessitate adding more cabinets (see section II.C.3 below).

b. Adequate maintenance of large files, e.g., filing, shifting, making changes and withdrawals, becomes increasingly difficult and expensive. The anticipated changes in entries and subject headings will intensify the problem.

c. Cards in public catalogs deteriorate physically over the years and provision must be made for their replacement or renovation.

d. Cards in public catalogs are susceptible to mutilation and even theft; it is virtually impossible to provide adequate security for the catalogs or to replace such cards.

2. Book catalog

a. Book catalogs, even when computer produced and printed, involve such high costs of printing and paper that it is unreasonable to suppose that they would be frequently reprinted in updated form. This inflexibility would necessitate frequent supplements, forcing users to check the basic set and multiple supplements, a time-consuming chore.

b. Although the space for shelving book catalogs is less than that required for a card catalog, the space needed for use, especially of multiple sets, is likely to be great enough to counteract this advantage.

c. Making changes and withdrawals in existing sets of any printed catalog is virtually impossible or extremely expensive.

d. There is no objective evidence, from the user's point of view, that a book catalog has any superiority over

any other form of catalog [see Subcommittee C report, part 1, section F.1].

3. Microform catalog (book catalog format produced in microform)

a. Unless the catalog is released and cumulated daily, the user will have to check multiple issues.

b. Adding changes and withdrawals in this format is virtually impossible except when the catalog is released.

c. An adequate number of microform readers/printers and sufficient space for their use must be provided, or serious queuing problems will result.

d. Eyestrain caused by microform readers will continue to be a problem for many users until manufacturers are able to overcome the problems of flickering image and difficulty of precise focusing.

b. Register-index

The register-index would be adequate only as an adjunct to an on-line catalog, and not as a replacement for the card catalog. Even if the index entries in themselves provide basic bibliographic information, many author and most subject searches will be cumbersome and time-consuming, and the user will be forced to refer back and forth constantly between the register and the index. It also does not offer the advantages of Boolean search strategies. If the index is in printed form, it will have many of the disadvantages of the book catalog described above (I.B.2); and if it is on microform, it will share some of the disadvantages of the microform book catalog (I.B.3) although it would be more easily updated.

II. Retain card: continuance of existing public card catalogs in the University Research Library and the branch libraries until an on-line public catalog system is in full operation.

A. Reasons

1. To close the present card catalogs and start new card catalogs which could not be discarded would eventually leave each unit with two closed card catalogs, a totally unsatisfactory situation for all library users. This result cannot be avoided until the library begins to build a machine-readable data base which properly allows for retrieval, changes and corrections and is suitable for incorporation into an on-line catalog.

2. To close the present card catalogs and start another type of catalog, such as a printed book catalog or microform register-index, would necessitate a long and expensive period of planning and development. The time, money and expertise involved would

[illegible] more productively spent in preparing for a [illegible] on-line system, or preparing [illegible] time system. Moreover, a catalog in a new format is not to be discarded for the reasons given in the section at [illegible], and the result would again be two closed catalogs.

3. Continuance of the present card catalogs will provide for the handling of records of outputs, acquisitions, [illegible] authorities while procedures for reorganizing these records into an on-line system are being developed. In practice, most machine-readable data bases are geared to accommodate [illegible] graphic units, and cannot incorporate the frequent [illegible] not only in holdings but in title, publisher, subject or [illegible] etc., that are characteristic of continuing publications. Moreover, the alternate catalog formats associated are not developed to accommodate such changes easily.

4. The continuance of the present card catalogs will provide for the easy handling of materials not cataloged [illegible], such as manuscripts, pamphlets and ephemeral materials, while procedures for reorganizing these records into an on-line system are developed.

5. There seems to be solid evidence that users find every type of catalog more satisfactory than a card catalog, [illegible] to an enduring reason, from the point of view of patron service, to introduce an intermediate format.

6. Essential Features

1. As soon as possible all cards for the public [illegible] should be produced from a machine-readable data base compatible with a future on-line system, the data to be stored for [illegible] operation of such a system. This can probably [illegible] until a number of on-line catalogs [illegible], which is about to be put operation and has proven satisfactory.

2. The present card catalogs must be maintained and [illegible] as a parallel system until the on-line system is in full and satisfactory operation.

3. Editing of the card catalogs, e.g., filing [illegible], shelf-reading, rigorous name authority control, correction of [illegible] and of misspelling or outdated information, [illegible] filing of complicated entries, must be [illegible], so that when a changeover occurs the catalogs will be in as good condition as possible to be either maintained or converted.

4. Cross references must be provided when [illegible] results in a changed form of entry.

5. The Catalog Information Service should be continued and, perhaps, expanded.

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[redacted]